

Minister Kevin Foster
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

31 December 2021

Dear Minister,

We thank you for our previous correspondence on the issue of returning UK citizens and their family members under the Surinder Singh route during the grace period ending on 29 March 2022, including your latest response of 15 September 2021, and for additional information provided to Minister Morton by the Home Office and forwarded to us in the last two months

We have had assurances from you and Minister Morton that the Home Office will consider reasonable grounds for late applications under this route, although we do not have clarity as regards the grounds. However, one assurance that is lacking is a clear statement that those family members who are entitled to enter the UK on a visitor permit will simply be able to do so without applying for an EUSS family permit in order to make an EUSS application. This would simplify the lives of those UKinEU and their families caught up in (and often separated) due to backlogs in processing EUSS family permit applications, which we understand are processed in strict date order and presumably without prioritising the Surinder Singh route applications subject to the imminent deadline. Moreover, it would also remove an additional step in the process, and reduce the volume of applications for the Home Office, while the eligibility of the relevant family members will in any event still be considered in full when they make their EUSS application.

Given that this is a finite group of people who have a window of less than three months left in a pandemic to complete the process, this would be a gesture of goodwill to British citizens in the EU, whom the UK government has consistently stated were a priority in the Brexit negotiations, and which is in the government's own gift to make. It would also help the government to keep the promise it made to its citizens in the EU as regards the grace period.

Yours sincerely

Jane Golding OBE
Co-Chair

Fiona Godfrey OBE
Co-Chair